



SHOP TALK

ISSUES AND NEWS AFFECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SHOPPING CENTRE INDUSTRY

SHOPPING CENTRE
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

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NSW GOVERNMENT DISCUSSION PAPER ON EMERGENCY SERVICES FUNDING

As foreshadowed in the recent NSW Budget ([Shop Talk 14/6/12](#)), the NSW Government has now released a Discussion Paper, [Funding our Emergency Services](#). The Discussion Paper includes a proposal for a property-based levy to help fund NSW's fire and emergency services (approximately \$1 billion annually) and to replace the existing funding arrangements, including the current insurance levy. The Discussion Paper discusses the various design, collection and transition issues of a property-based levy. Encouragingly the Discussion Paper recognises that 17% of call-outs relate to motor vehicle incidents and raises the issue of whether some proportion of funding should be raised as an annual charge on motor vehicles. The Shopping Centre Council has provided preliminary comments to the NSW Treasurer and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on the proposed levy. Submissions close on 8 October.

NSW LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW PANEL RELEASES CONSULTATION PAPER

The NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel has released its Consultation Paper on the review of local government. This follows the previous Destination 2036 process ([Shop Talk 8/3/12](#)). The review will focus on key issues including infrastructure, boundaries and the financial sustainability of local councils, which raises the issue of revenue and rates. The gouging of commercial property, with rate increases well above so-called 'pegged' rates, has been ignored for too long. Some shopping centres now pay more in council rates than in land tax. On a positive note, a previous reference to transitioning to 'improved valuation' for rating purposes does not feature in the paper. This would have provided councils with a further opportunity to 'rate gouge' commercial property. Submissions close on 14 September.

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT RELEASES ZONING REFORMS FOR CONSULTATION

Victorian Planning Minister, Matthew Guy, has [announced](#) a package of proposed commercial zoning reforms for consultation. The fine details of the reforms are not yet available but the Minister's media statements suggest that the proposed reforms target retail uses by enabling a wider variety of retail uses in activity centres under a new 'Commercial 1' zone. The reforms also propose the removal of retail floor space caps, which can stall or limit retail expansion. The Shopping Centre Council will be lodging a submission. Submissions close on 21 September.

REPORT OF THE INQUIRY INTO GIFT CARDS IN THE AUSTRALIAN MARKET

The Federal Assistant Treasurer, David Bradbury, has released the Commonwealth Consumer Affairs Advisory Council (CCAAC) report on [Gift Cards in the Australian Market](#). The Shopping Centre Council lodged a [submission](#), and appeared before the inquiry, arguing there was no evidence of market failures that required additional regulation ([Shop Talk 15/3/12](#)). The CCAAC has commented that the inquiry "has been unable to find any overwhelming evidence of structural consumer detriment warranting a regulatory response". In order to further assist consumers, however, the CCAAC has made suggestions for the industry to consider in developing and promoting industry best practices when issuing gift cards.

PROPERTY COUNCIL 'REVELLING IN RETAIL' LUNCH IN MELBOURNE ON 20 JULY

PCA, Victoria, is hosting a *Revelling in Retail* lunch on 20 July in Melbourne, featuring prominent women panelists, including Susan MacDonald, General Manager, Retail, Mirvac. Click [here](#) for details and [here](#) to register.